

ENTERTAINMENT

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

Broadway Bound Report: is hanging out in a graveyard "More Fun Than Bowling"

by Garland Lee Thompson

About the Playwright

In the program credits and notes, for the Storefront Theatre season opening (thru Oct. 15th, 1989) play, "More Fun Than Bowling," at the Winningstad Theatre, it reads as follows:

"When we were choosing our Twentieth Anniversary season, two plays by Steven Dietz stayed on our list through many whittlings and narrowings until we were faced with a choice: which one should we do? But the plays were so good and so unlike each other that we finally gave up and decided to showcase the versatility of this rising young playwright by opening with the off-beat, funny, and tender "MORE FUN THAN BOWLING and following it with TEN NOVEMBER, haunting, beautiful, brutal and chilling.

Steven Dietz has had playwrighting fellowships from the McKnight and Jerome Foundations and National endowment for the Arts. He is both a member playwright and resident director at The Playwrights Center in Minneapolis" (As founder of the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop in New York, I remember this well known playwrights' group from important regional playwrights development closed meetings at the National Playwrights; Conference, in the late seventies, at the Eugene O'Neill Center, in Waterford, Conn. Their director at the time, was in on a plan to divide up the Mid-West "turf" for their region's playwrights conference and festival. It was a "deep" power trip).

About the Director

The program notes further states: "Anne Gerety has been a theatre professional for over 35 years, has acted in over 100 plays, and takes responsibility for having found a fine old storefront space at 933 North Russell on a rainy day in the winter of 1970, rented it for \$50 a month, and with the help of a small group of fellow theatre artists and family, started chipping plaster off the walls for the purpose of experimenting with theatre in a personal way without the interference of a repressive hierarchy. Heavy duty! Write on Miss Anne.

At the time she was with the American Theatre Company at Portland State (was this the place of "a repressive hierarchy," of which she speaks?). And she was seen in the "The Cherry Orchard," prior a member of Seattle Repertory Theatre, Trinity Rep, Yale Rep, etc.

Remember "The Four Big W's"

So, with this playwright and director's extensive theatre background, you would think that they, as an experienced playwright and director, would remember "the Four Big W's": The What, the Who, The When and the Where, while "hanging out in the graveyard" scenes equipped with three "planters earth" grave mounds. Yes, out of which, one actor, Ed Collier, playing "Jake," the widower/father, from dirt, dust and all, makes his entrance (and he's the live-one, no less!).

I kept waiting for the other two graves to open up and produce some more "bodies," but these were suppose to be the truly "dead ones," the late wives, "Loretta" (Raissa Flemming), and "Lois" (Megan Taylor).

Now mind you, the dead people, they did show up, but here's the problem that I had with the piece and direction; with the dead ones just walking on stage. Now the live one ("Jake," the husband whose had two wives die from lighting striking her carrying their bowling trophy and a freak bowling alley accident), he just pops out of a covered grave, talking about trying to get use to "the hang of it," death and lying around forever in some potted plant covered graveyard.

Do you believe it, he tells us, the audience that he's just practicing for

"his death trip;" equipped with an air straw and a dime novel, in the opening scene. Is this "mummy-daddy" not wrapped too tight or what? All of this and his daughter, "Molly" (played very "Stephen King" and quite well by Twila Griffin, a sweet child, who is also just playing around "the old graveyard family plot," plotting. She inadvertently pulls out his air line (it must be a trip every night for the actor, getting buried alive and waiting for the open stage house at the Winnie "grave site" to fill up, excuse the expression, before he makes his "graveyard smashing, dirt flying" entrance. Was it kinky or what? Maybe he's "a moleman" and they built him a tunnel to his "tomb."

Now back to the problem; first the opening character, "Dyson" (played by Rick Jones), the black on black, gun-toting, gimmick briefcase carrying, dark deed-type weirdo-dude, lurking about this very same popular grave scene, "falsely" set up for deadly doings. He tells us that he always gets "his man; as a hit man, and will lay out here in the self same graveyard, until he gets this "Jake dude," who is "his special assignment" on his "hit list." He turns out to be just "a pussy cat of a dude, working for "Miss Maggie," Jake's first and former rich wife.

And how many kids do you know, looking like they're from "Who's the boss" TV, riding a "mean" bicycle around her two late stepmothers' and father's future grave plots, to deliver a fresh bowling pin with pin wheels and potted plants? She, "Molly," talks to "the dead wives," just as she speaks to her living dad, in what turns out to be theatre "flash-backs," but this is "the time and space" confusion of the four Big "W's" that I'm talking about. It's kind of "Waiting for Godotish" here and it's hard to follow when and who these dead women are, and coming in what order of sequence and event. The playwright just throws them at us and we have to figure it out the best way we can as to just who they are and when did they live and die on "poor old Jake," "Molly's" bowling alley-owning, old man.

What's "Driving Miss Maggie"
Is the playwright, who is making a statement about death and bowling alleys in small-town America, trying to tell us that it may be better "to be dead in the graveyard" than forever hanging out in funky little old local bowling alleys, setting endless pin machines that could fall on one and struggling to win back meaningless trophies that could cause one to be "struck by lighting?"

Yes, while waiting for death to appear like a bad joke and the chauffeur, "Dyson," as in "Driving Miss Maggie" (referring to the popular New York play, "Driving Miss Daisy"), turns out to work for "the first rich ex-wife, Maggie," who ran off long ago and has also now died in the greek islands (almost everybody dies in this play and we are still laughing).

And she left Jake "a bundle," so he can die a rich man or what? The point of space, time, "plot" and reason for this "grave matter," for most of the play, is as clear as the dirt in this show. Steven Dietz, "you are not well," at the Storefront, but I came to "dig you" anyway, because you're weird!

If anyone has further questions, have or want reservations for this piece of "slice of life after death and bowling Americana," call 224-4001, and ask for yourself just what the "grave plot" of this cryptic little play is all about. Is death a gutterball in a laneless alley or something. Who knows, maybe the Shadow do! Write on, Steven and Storefront. Bring back the question and answer sessions after the show, okay?



Portland Opera opens its 25th Season with the grandest opera of them all—Verdi's

AIDA

Thrill to the spectacle—the music—the magnificence!
In Italian with projected English translations

Sept. 30, Oct. 2, 4, 7

Saturdays 8:00 PM—Monday & Wednesday 7:30 PM
The Opera House, Civic Auditorium

Four spectacular performances. Best seats Mon. & Wed.

Order without delay!

\$18.00 \$27.00 \$36.00 \$65.00

CHARGE BY PHONE (503) 241-1802

9:30-5:00 weekdays

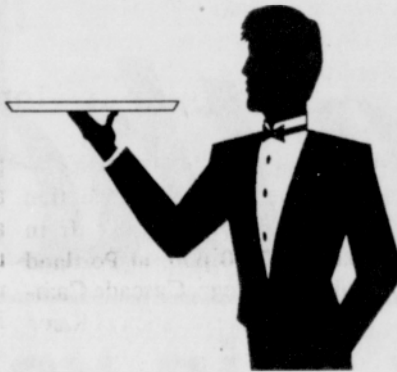
Tickets at Portland Opera, G.I. Joe's Ticket Master statewide,
Civic Auditorium and Performing Arts Center Box Offices



1516 SW Alder Portland, Oregon 97205

see you at the opera!

Storefront Theatre Remounts "Woza Albert!" at Third and Burnside After Highly Successful Run at IFCC Theatre



Due to audience demand, Storefront Theatre is extending **WOZA ALBERT!** at its Third & Burnside theatre, after a very successful five week run at IFCC Theatre. Storefront Theatre's highly acclaimed production of the South African play will run **Tuesdays and Wednesdays September 26 thru October 25.**

Written by Mbongeni Ngema, Percy Mtwa and Barney Simon of the market Theatre in Johannesburg South Africa, **WOZA ALBERT!** shows what might happen if the second coming of Christ took place in present day South Africa. Actors **RICK JONES** and **ANTHONY P. ARMSTRONG** portray a myriad of characters to create a vivid tapestry of South African life as its citizens react to the return of the savior.

Reviews of the show have been universally positive:

"Powerfully comic, firmly committed social theatre. It has the humor of the underdog and the rhythm of the streets, and it certainly has a satiric edge...but **WOZA** is also a surprisingly hopeful play." -Oregonian

"A poetic, powerful impassioned production that teems with the myriad emotions of suppressed people and their culture. This is the kind of work I associate with Storefront: brilliant, controversial, redefining theatre's potential for education as well as outreach." -Oregon Public Broadcasting

WOZA ALBERT! is directed by **JOHN ZAGONE** lighting by **JEFF FORBES**, vocal/movement coaching by **BRUCE SMITH**, and dialect coach was **COLLIN JONES**. (**COLLIN JONES** was arrested September 1 in South Africa along with Bishop Desmond Tutu and released later that day. The issues dealt with in **WOZA ALBERT!**, such as apartheid and racism remain as current as today's news.)

Performances at Third & Burnside began on Tuesday September 26 at 8pm, and will continue Tuesdays and Wednesdays thru October 25. All shows are 8pm, tickets are \$12 regular, \$10 for students/seniors; student groups of 20 or more pay only \$8/ For tickets call Storefront at 224-4001

Exhibits by Al Goldsby

Attitudes of Portland Art Gallery is proud to present metal sculpture and prints by a premier Portland sculptor of renowned reputation, artist **AL GOLDSBY**.

Mr. Goldsby epitomizes the company's concept of a symbolic relationship between the artistry of sculptor and stylist.

The show opening and reception for the artist will be held on **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5th** between 5:00 pm. and 8:00 pm. The show will continue throughout the month of October.

Mr. Goldsby's many exhibits include; Salishan Lodge, University of Oregon Art Museum, the State Capital Museum of Washington, the Portland Art Museum, Coos Art Museum

in Coos Bay, Corvallis Art Center, Graystone Gallery, Randells Associates. His work is among the collections of Haseltine collection, Museum of Art, Boeing Aircraft Corp., Blue Cross, First Interstate Bank, Hoffman Construction and many private collections. Commissions include the Washington Park Zoo, Lloyd Center Corp., Canby United Methodist Church and many other private homes throughout the local area.

Pope & Talbot, Halsey Mill, Halsey Oregon and the Central Oregon Welcome Center, Bend Oregon are his most recent commissions to be completed later this year.

For further information contact: Robert Wright, Gallery Director

FEEL THE MUSIC



\$2.00 off
Compact Disc

\$6.99
Album
or Cassette

MUSIC

East Portland
32nd & Burnside
231-3926

MILLENNIUM

NW Portland
23rd & NW Johnson
248-0163

Expires 10-12-89

023

MORE FUN THAN BOWLING

by Steven Dietz Now Thru October 15th

At The Portland Center For The Performing Arts

Exciting 20th Season
Opening Production



WOZA ALBERT!
By Ngema, Mtwa & Simon
Now Thru October 25th
At SW 3rd & Burnside

Limited Engagement
Back By Popular Demand



Phone
224-4001

For Reservations